

A P2V Neptune of Patrol Squadron 18 and another U.S. plane fly past the starboard quarter of Soviet freighter *Okhotsk* in December 1962. Visible on deck are crates containing the fuselages of Il-28 Beagle bombers being returned to the Soviet Union from Cuba.



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Captain Richard S. White III, immediately dispatched a message reporting this development through the naval command structure. It soon reached the United Nations, where Soviet representatives suggested that after a short period of time the destroyer captain again contact *Volgoles*. When *Vesole* next signaled the Soviet ship, her crewmen promptly uncovered the missiles.

In another incident, guided missile destroyer *Biddle* (DDG 5) steamed so close to *Leninsky Komsomol* to photograph the ship that the

Soviet captain sounded a warning horn. *Biddle* maintained her position to finish the task. The Soviet captain protested by loudspeaker. The destroyer's captain, Commander Paul Roth, responded through a Russian-speaking officer by inviting the Soviet to lunch. The latter replied that unfortunately he had other plans.

Not every interception was a tense affair, however. Later in the operation, a helicopter from *Wasp* (CVS 18) intercepted the Soviet ship

Destroyers of the multinational quarantine force (Task Force 137) sortie from Trinidad, West Indies, on 12 November. Pictured left to right: Venezuelan ARV *Zulia* (D 21), USS *Mullinix* (DD 944), Argentine ARA *Rosales* (D 22) and ARA *Espora* (D 21), and Venezuelan ARV *Nueva Esparta* (D 11).



*Alapayevsk*. Although listed by the Soviets as a missile carrier, *Alapayevsk* carried only support vehicles on deck. Non-sailors, probably missile technicians, were on the deck sunning themselves. Crewmen of the American aircraft exchanged pleasantries with the Soviets and one officer even lowered a line to which was fastened his Navy tie clasp. In return, the Soviets sent up a bottle of vodka.

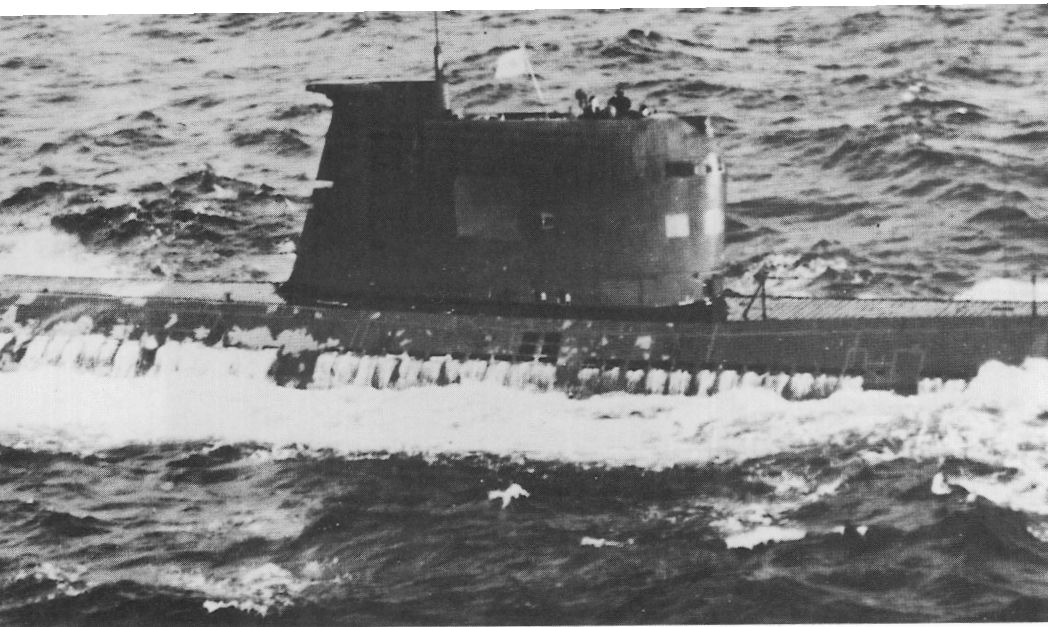
The arrival of additional naval forces in the quarantine area made it even less likely



Capt. Rodderick O. Middleton, Chief of Staff to Commander Carrier Division 4, holds the bottle of vodka he received from the crew of Soviet freighter *Alapayevsk*. Standing with him (left to right) are Lt. John H. Slough, a Russian language interpreter; LCdr. Thermon L. Ray, copilot of the HSS-2, to their rear; and Cdr. John M. Wondergem, pilot of the helo and Commanding Officer of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 3.



that Soviet merchantmen could avoid close inspection. Beginning on 12 November, a multinational destroyer force, designated Task Force 137, operated out of the U.S. Navy base at Trinidad. As an expression of solidarity among the nations of the Western Hemisphere, the Argentine destroyers *ARA Rosales* and *ARA Espora* and the Venezuelan ships *ARV Zulia* and *ARV Nueva Esparta* steamed in company with U.S. destroyer *Mullinix* (DD 944). Completing one mission before the end of the quarantine, the task force patrolled the eastern Caribbean looking



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A Soviet Foxtrot-class submarine, with "Red Star" ensign flying, proceeds on the surface near the quarantine line on 9 November 1962. Soviet sailors in the conning tower watch as the U.S. patrol plane photographing their submarine's passage flies by.

for Cuba-bound shipping.

Meanwhile in the Atlantic, U.S. and Canadian forces continued to monitor Soviet surface ship and submarine movements. Canadian planes located the Soviet intelligence trawler *Shkval* about 500 miles southwest of Argentina, Newfoundland, just to the east of the sub-air barrier. The Royal Canadian Navy frigate HMCS *Inch Arran* soon shadowed the trawler.

Lajes-based U.S. Navy patrol planes tracked the Soviet tug *Pamir* as she rendezvoused with the disabled sub *F 945*, the latter already under watch by U.S. destroyer *Keppler*. *Pamir* crowded *Keppler*, trying to keep the American ship away from the submarine. After several evasive maneuvers by *Keppler*, *Pamir*'s captain gave up his fruitless effort. *Keppler* stayed within 2,500 yards of the crippled Soviet sub.

Not only such occurrences at sea but differing interpretations of the Soviet-American understanding had the potential to destabilize the situation. For instance, the Soviets initially balked at categorizing their Il-28 bombers as offensive weapons and their special representative to the

UN, Vasily Kuznetsov, warned that Castro might react irrationally if these aircraft were withdrawn from Cuba. John J. McCloy, Kuznetsov's American counterpart, then observed that failure to remove the bombers or any hostile Cuban actions would be viewed by Washington as an unfriendly act. Kuznetsov understood the meaning of this communication: get the bombers out of Cuba and control Castro, or risk reheating the confrontation. The Soviets soon agreed to remove the bombers as well as the missiles.

For several weeks after 15 November, when President Kennedy ended regular low-level reconnaissance missions over Cuba, U.S. photographic planes periodically overflew the embarkation ports. In this way, U.S. leaders ensured that the Soviets lived up to their agreement and removed the bombers.

Following the agreement to withdraw the Il-28s, the crisis wound down quickly. On 20 November, President Kennedy announced an immediate end to the quarantine. Admiral Dennison ordered his Atlantic Fleet ships to return

to home ports or normal operating areas. U.S. and Canadian ships ceased shadowing Soviet warships, even though some surface and air patrol units continued to observe and photograph the three Soviet merchantmen hauling the bombers from Cuba. The photographic evidence of this surveillance effort confirmed the removal of the last Soviet offensive weapons from Castro's island. At least for the U.S. Navy, the Cuban Missile Crisis was now over.

Holding up his end of the agreement with Khrushchev, Kennedy disavowed any intention to invade Cuba and drew down U.S. forces deployed to the southern United States in readiness to attack the island. The president also relaxed the alert posture of the Polaris and SAC strategic deterrence forces. In April 1963, Kennedy completed the "secret" part of the agreement and withdrew American IRBMs from both Turkey and Italy. By then, the missiles were not needed because the Navy had committed several Polaris submarines to support NATO partners. The Navy could provide a local nuclear shield for America's allies from politically neutral international waters.